

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS - OFFICIAL ENGLISH TEXT OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS PLATFORM.

REF: REYKJAVIK 1195

1. THE ICELANDIC LANGUAGE IN CERTAIN CONTEXTS AFFORDS A WIDE RANGE OF MEANINGS WHEN TRANSLATED INTO ANOTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGE, SUCH AS ENGLISH. THIS IS SHOWING TO BE TRUE WITH REGARD TO TRANSLATING THE DEFENSE PART OF THE NEW GOVERNMENTS PLATFORM. AN OFFICIAL TRANSLATION HAS NOT YET BEEN ISSUED.

2. WHEN I WAS MEETING WITH MFA SEC GEN PETUR THORSTEINSSON YESTERDAY AND ASKED FOR THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION, I WAS TOLD THAT CONTRARY TO USUAL CUSTOM, THE PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE INDICATED THEY WOULD PREPARE THE TRANSLATION. I WAS THEN SHOWN THEIR DRAFTMIN, WHICH I FELT DISTORTED THE INTENT OF THE NEW GOVTS DECLARATION AND WHICH COULD CAUSE US SOME TROUBLE LATER ON. I THEREUPON SUGGESTED SOME CHANGES IN PHRASEOLOGY THAT WOULD BE CLOSER TO THE VERSION TRANSMITTED BY REFTEL WHILE AT SAME TIME RECOGNIZING THAT IT HAD TO BEAR SOME SEMBLANCE TO THE ICELANDIC WORDS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DRAFT VERSION SHOWN TO ME STATED "SPECIAL COOPERATION SHALL BE MAINTAINED WITH USA AS LONG AS NATO OPERATES A DEFENSE AND RECONNAISSANCE
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BASE IN THIS COUNTRY." I THOUGHT OUR VERSION SUITED THE

CIRCUMSTANCES BETTER AND I SUGGESTED "SPECIAL COOPERATION SHALL BE MAINTAINED WITH THE USA AS LONG AS A DEFENSE AND RECONNAISSANCE BASE IS OPERATED IN THIS COUNTRY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF NATO." IN ANOTHER SECTION, THE PM'S OFFICE VERSION STATED "IT IS THE AIM OF THE GOVT THAT AS MANY OF THE DEFENSE FORCE FUNCTIONS AS POSSIBLE BE TAKEN OVER BY ICELANDERS." I SUGGESTED CHANGING THIS TO "IT IS THE AIM OF THE GOVT THAT ALL NON-MILITARY FUNCTIONS WHERE FEASIBLE, ETC." ANOTHER SECTION OF PM'S OFFICE VERSION STATED "ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE DEFENSE FORCE SHALL HAVE LIVING QUARTERS ON THE BASE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." I SUGGESTED CHANGING THIS TO "THE MILITARY MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE FORCE SHALL BE HOUSED WITHIN THE BASE AREA AS SOON AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT." THE LAST CHANGE I SUGGESTED HAD TO DO WITH THE AIRPORTS. THE VERSION SHOWN ME STATED "THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRPOSTS SHALL BE SEPARATED." MY SUGGESTION WAS "A SEPARATION SHALL BE MADE BETWEEN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEFENSE FORCE ON THE BASE AND GENERAL AIRPORT ACTIVITIES."

3. AS SOON AS THE SEC GEN HAD GOTTEN OVER HIS INITIAL STATE OF BEING PERPLEXED THAT A PERSON WAS TRANSLATING ICELANDIC WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF KNOWING ICELANDIC (COMMENT: I AM ACQUAINTED WITH THE PM'S OFFICE STAFF AND THEIR ENGLISH IS PRETTY BAD), HE AGREED HE WOULD TRY TO ACCOMMODATE MY SUGGESTIONS IF THE ICELANDIC LANGUAGE PERMITTED. THE SEC GEN PHONED ME THIS MORNING AND SAID ALMOST ALL THE CHANGES COULD BE ACCOMMODATED WITH EXCEPTION OF A FEW WORDS " HERE AND THERE" BUT WHICH WILL NEVERTHELESS REFLECT THE MEANING MY SUGGESTIONS WERE MEANT TO CONVEY. HE AGREED WITH ME THAT THE PM'S OFFICE VERSION WAS SLOPPY.

3. THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH VERSION WILL PROBABLY BE ISSUED ON MONDAY BUT I BELIEVE IT WILL BE PRETTY CLOSE TO THE VERSION STATED REFTEL. THERE SHOULD BE NO SURPRISES.

4. OBVIOUSLY THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE KEPT IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

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